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**ROLE OF PAPA SHIRANDULA TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES IN FRAMING THE
POSITION OF A MAN AND WOMAN IN KAKAMEGA TOWN**

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Abstract

Television drama series has far reaching effects on the viewers` perception of social issues such as sustainable development in every culture and society. This study examined the role of Papa Shirandula television drama series in framing the position of a man and woman in Kakamega town. Specific objectives included; to examine the perception of men and women by the Viewers of the TV drama series and to assess the effect of Papa Shirandula TV drama in stereotyping femininity and masculinity on the viewers. The study employed social construction of reality theory. The research was carried out among the residents of Kakamega municipality who are audiences of Papa Shirandula TV show. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population was 442 from which a sample of 133 household heads were derived using simple Random sampling technique. Interviews, focused group discussions and textual analysis were used to generate data. Data analysis was done using the qualitative data analysis techniques. Reliability and validity of the Research instruments were ensured through a pilot study. The results show that femininity was portrayed in terms of a woman being a house wife, homemaker and mother; ignorant, inferior, emotional and dependent on men while masculinity was portrayed in terms of a man being a breadwinner, head of family, superior, non-emotional, independent and decision maker. These stereotypes directly match with the viewers` cultural perception of femininity and masculinity. In conclusion, the role of Papa Shirandula television drama Series demeans the position of a woman while exalting the position of the man in Kakamega town and in Kenya at large. This replicates and reinforce stereotypes of men and women already existing in the society. The study recommended that television drama content creators ought to develop content devoid of the traditional gender stereotypes and aim at ensuring gender equality and incorporate emerging issues that younger generation can relate to and learn from.

Key words: Masculinity, Femininity, framing, television, Drama

INTRODUCTION

Baran (2004) posits that television drama series make viewers believe and are not a reality. Television drama series have an impact on the perception of both women and men through stereotyping masculinity and femininity. Typically, men are portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and

largely uninvolved in human relationships. Typically shows males as “aggressive, dominant, and often engage in exciting activities in which they receive rewards from others for their masculine’ accomplishments.” Similarly, other studies reveal that the majority of men in television drama series are independent, aggressive, and in charge.

According to Rodman (2006), “Television drama series have been largely blamed for a wide scope of various societal trends and individual effects, including but not limited to the distortion of reality, violence and more so stereotyping”. Research was conducted by Akorfa Adia (2014) concluded that telenovelas have become part of the Ghanaian society but admitted that there is room for indigenous telenovelas that showcase the cultural heritage of Ghana, which must be encouraged so as to make room for more audience. Okafor (2008) says that results show that TV drama series exert influence on viewers as they perceive what they view as a representation of real life situation in Nigeria. He recorded that subjects say TV drama series shape their opinions and are a means of portraying social ills. The results in Ghana and Nigeria are a representation of the effect of TV drama series on viewers’ perception of social issues such as sustainable development in many African nations especially in Kenya.

A research conducted Wanyama L. (2012) on Effects of Foreign Soap operas on University female students’ perception of lifestyle, showed that soap operas watching in Kenya had an impact on students’ perception of lifestyle especially on dressing, relationships, career choice and family roles. Likewise, Papa Shirandula being a local television drama series has an effect on the viewers’ perception of social issues.

According to Kahiga (2010), Kenyan television drama series tend to represent women in terms of: Beauty (within narrow conventions), Size/physique (again, within narrow conventions), sexuality, Emotional (as opposed to intellectual) dealings, Relationships (as opposed to independence/freedom). These stereotypical portrayals impact on the viewers’ perception of femininity and roles of women in development. This study examined the role of Papa Shirandula TV Drama series in framing the position of a man and woman in Kakamega town in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Globally Kojoyan and Gevorgyan (2014), posit that operas both reveal and re-shape gender stereotypes. Therefore, in this regard, soap-operas have a huge capacity of popularizing certain types of images and perceptions of masculinity and femininity. A study carried out in Kenya in Egerton University- Nakuru Town Campus, on effects of soap operas on young females’ perception of male-female relationships, concluded that there was a notable influence of the soap operas on the young females’ perceptions about male and female relationships, Kimeu, M. N. and Mareri, L. A. (2008).

However, according to a 2010 Strategic Research survey by Kenya Film Commission in Kakamega, Papa Shirandula television drama series which is widely watched in western Kenya and particularly in Kakamega has effect on viewers’ perception of social issues. It is therefore important to examine how the TV drama show frame the viewers’ position of men and women in a stereotyped way in Kakamega. This study therefore, was interested examining whether this is the case with Papa Shirandula TV drama series. Therefore, this study examined the role of Papa Shirandula TV Drama series in framing the position of men and women in Kakamega town in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Papa Shirandula TV Drama series in framing the position of a man and woman in Kakamega town in Kenya. Various stereotypes of femininity and masculinity created by the Papa Shirandula TV drama series and their effect on the viewers' perception were examined.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to meet the following specific objectives:

- i) Examine the perception of men and women by the Viewers of Papa Shirandula TV drama series in Kakamega.
- ii) Establish the effect of Papa Shirandula TV drama in stereotyping femininity and masculinity on the viewers.

1.5 Research Questions

- i) How are men and women perceived by Viewers of Papa Shirandula TV drama series in Kakamega?
- ii) What is the effect of Papa Shirandula TV drama in stereotyping femininity and masculinity on the viewers?

Scope of the Study

This study examined the role of papa Shirandula television drama series in framing the position of a man and woman in Kakamega. The study focused on all characters in the TV series both male and female. The female characters were to help bring out femininity, while male characters to help. The study analysed two seasons of about five episodes each per month between January 2016 and June 2016, which translates to a total of 12 seasons and 60 episodes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Television and Framing of positions of men and women in the society

Nesbitt-Ahmed Z. (2015), argues that prolonged exposure to mass media, especially television, due to its visual aspect makes knowledge to accumulate. Similarly, it causes behaviour to change among women projecting the participation of women in decision – making, inter family communication and role-negotiation of women at home which can help in achieving better quality of life, according to Sharon Begley (2000), television framing of the position of men and women through stereotypes present a trap into which many people can fall. Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson (1995) reported on a study that showed how the existence of negative stereotypes affects those who are part of the stereotyped groups through framing their world view in a certain way.

Representations of femininity and masculinity

In TV drama series, women they tend to take the role of helper or object, passive rather than active. Often their passivity extends to victim-hood. Men still are represented three times more frequent compare to women, as TV drama characters and are the predominant focus of news stories. Therefore, there is an increasing support for the idea that men are unfairly represented in the media, Evans A. (2014).

Images of femininity in the contemporary Television drama series.

McIlwaine (2016) argue that television drama series provide images and figures that spectators can imitate and identify with. The images play a vital role in socializing and educating individuals using social and sexual role models (as well as a lot of different positions of the individual) that consider important certain patterns of behaviour and a certain style, while discouraging any others. The ideal of femininity television drama promote also reflects women's position in a certain society, Evans A. (2015). Bogart as Quoted by Roever S. (2016) wrote: "With no other form of impersonal communication has the sharing of experience been possible on so universal a scale and to so intense a degree as with television."

Analytically, one of its most potent effects on American society – the provision of a centrally produced, Standardized, and homo- generous common culture-is as much an artifact of how this medium's technological capacity has been organized as it is the inevitable result of the technology itself, Bartolomei, M (2010).

Perceptions of Women and Men on Masculinity and Femininity

Women are often stereotype of as warm and caring yet incompetent while men are stereotyped as competent but not warm (Fiske et al., 2002). This is consistent with the Victorian notion of the Cult of True Womanhood and with the Male Gender Role Identity respectively. The question is whether the women and men still measured by these standards, or whether the changes in women's and men's behaviors produced changes in the stereotypes and broadened the boundaries of acceptable behaviors for men and women.

The results of the study clearly showed that Papa Shirandula television drama series reflects images of femininity and masculinity as they are in the society. Therefore, it is without doubt that the culture, believes and realities of Papa Shirandula TV drama viewers in Kakamega informs the content developers on the way they present masculinity and femininity in the TV series.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura as cited in Wirtz (2009) said that "children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modelling". Therefore, he placed a caution that TV viewing might create a violent reality, which has to be feared for its capacity to influence the way we deal with people every day. In a nut shell he (Bandura, 1986) says that people learn by observing what other people do and considering the consequences experienced by those people. They then rehearse what might happen in their own lives if they followed the other peoples' behaviour there after they Take action by trying the behaviour themselves and Compare their experiences with what happened to the other people. This leads them to Confirming their belief in the new behavior, hence develop the behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of qualitative research is to shed light on a particular social phenomenon in its natural setting (Mugenda, 2008). According to Gay (2009), qualitative research seldom seeks to establish universal generalizations that are context free, but believes that actions are strongly influenced by the context within which they occur. This study employed descriptive survey research design.

Study Area

The study area covered Kakamega municipality located in the western part of Kenya. Kakamega town is the head quarter of Kakamega County. According to a survey by Ipsos Synovate (2015) Kakamega town was selected on the premise that Papa Shirandula TV drama series is widely watched by the residents. The town being cosmopolitan enabled the researcher to obtain a balanced representation of the characteristics and conditions likely to give a correct representation of the variables under inquiry.

Study Population

The study targeted the inhabitants of Kakamega town who were viewers of papa Shirandula television drama series. The study only targeted the head of households in the houses that had a television set and watched Papa Shirandula television drama series, because the researcher believed that the household heads were better placed to give relevant information to the study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Samples of the households were randomly selected on the basis of estates in Kakamega Municipality. The sample size for this study was 133 respondents. The researcher calculated 30% of the target population per sampled estate whose total respondents was 132.6 but was rounded off to 133 respondents which Kerlinger (2004) refers to as representative.

Instruments of Data Collection

Interview Schedule and Focus Group Discussions Schedule

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments.

The interview schedule for this study were designed, developed and subjected to thorough appraisal and discussion with colleagues, supervisors and other experts both in research and in the field of mass media. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instruments, a test re-test technique was used.

Data Collection Procedures

Focus group discussion, individual interviews and textual analysis were used in this study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using the general qualitative data analysis techniques that included; Documentation of the data and the process of data collection, Organization/categorization of the data into concepts, Connection of the data to show how one concept may influence another, Corroboration/legitimization, by evaluating alternative explanations, disconfirming evidence, and searching for negative cases and Representing the account (reporting the findings).

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.

Television and framing of positions of men and women in the society

A large number of respondents had an idea about television framing, as the general presentation of characters in television drama series. Very few respondents did not understand what television framing actually meant. However, from Papa Shirandula TV drama series cast point of view television framing

position of men and women is simply a reflection of societal and cultural view of the men and women in the society.

There was general consensus that Papa Shirandula television drama series frames the position of men and women among the viewers and in the society. A negligible number of respondents felt that Papa Shirandula TV series does not frame but is simply a mirror that reflects societal believes behaviours and culture. Men were framed as brave, adventurous, being able to think rationally, being strong and effective. They cited Papa Shirandula being strong body-wise, able to think through his many problems, bread winner, father and brave enough to face everyone including his boss, Juma Anderson. Juma Anderson was also mentioned as being decisive, bossy, in-charge and dominant in his company affairs. This simply puts men at the helm and in control of socioeconomic issues. Their roles and position is elevated compared to that of women.

The respondents who held that papa Shirandula doesn't frame but simply reflected the society, brings into perspective that the society's culture does the framing. Even so men are still put in dominant and elevated positions while the women have been placed in subordinate roles. Papa Shirandula television drama series framing of men and women has definitely influenced the viewers' notion of men and women, in line with the framed portrayals. Therefore, Papa Shirandula TV drama just like other TV drama has impacted on audiences' view of the position of men and women in the society in such a way that it elevates the position of a man and undermines the position of the woman.

Perception of men and women by viewers.

The definition of femininity was given in the following connotations: nurturing, housewife, dependent on men, submissive, damsel in distress, homemaker, and supporting role or softer. This show that women are looked at as objects associated with weakness, fragile vulnerability, gentleness, nurturers, passive, and to some extent invisibility.

The definition of masculinity however, is the opposite of femininity. The audience responded most often with: independent, provider, dominant, opportunistic, more educated employed, unemotional and men in charge. This does elevate the man over the woman. This supports the traditional patriarchal notion of masculinity which shows men as powerful and successful, occupy high status position, initiate action and act from rational mind as opposed to emotion, and organize their lives around problem solving.

It was apparent were those respondents who tended to like feminine characters were female who understood and accepted what it all entails. When probed further, the idea arose that there is a stigma attached to being female and the feminine lifestyle. Respondent 9 (mentioned this several times,) "just wanting to be a mother is the most applauded position of a woman". However, the male respondents liked the masculine characters as they too identified with the socially constructed position of men as being in control.

From Papa Shirandula drama series most respondents said that men are perceived as dominant and possessors of both power and status through great control than the women, they drive, they get drunk and violent. Only a few respondents said that some men are portrayed as weak and frail, irresponsible, and mouthy and these cited Njoroge whom many termed as a disgrace to men. This reveals that the society doesn't associate men with weakness or fragility. Still Papa Shirandula TV drama viewers' culture condemns the woman when she goes against societal expectations. This is because some respondents took issue with Mama Filethi for beating her husband Njoroge even when he was irresponsible. That means

women are to bear so much mischief and ills from the men. These perceptions have always impacted on the viewers' perception of men and women. The men are exalted while women are downtrodden forcing them to bear their miserable lot. These perceptions have shaped the viewers' behaviour as reflected in their roles and male-female daily relationships.

Many respondents perceived women as submissive and hold subordinate roles to men, gossipers and husband batterers. A case in point was that all the women in the office are subordinate to Juma, he is the final decision maker and in everything he must be consulted. Wilbroda and Awinja are subordinate to Shirandula. They depend on him as the bread winner and decision maker. His decisions are final and cannot be questioned by them. Basically the drama series has subjugated the woman into inferior beings with lower occupational roles. This is not the ideal situation as there are women who are independent and in charge of their families. This was revealed by few respondents who felt that some women have been portrayed as in charge and independent as well. Example of Mama Filethi who not only beats up Njoroge (her husband) but insists that he provides for the family which Njoroge can't do, she therefore raises her two children alone. Mama Nyagothie is a widow who take care of her daughter's education and does invests in rental houses from which Shirandula and his family are tenants. This reflects the findings of Pérez Valverde, (2009) and Dominguez-Rue, (2010), who say that most female characters, who at first may seem to be strong role models, often remain curtailed by patriarchal norms of emphasized femininity such that they eventually are taken back to traditional roles, "safely brought back to orthodox femininity." They are also constructed as virgins in need of rescue, wives and mothers. However, if they refuse to conform, they are often represented as outsiders which is the case with Mama Filethi when he beats Njoroge, monstrous and too- powerful or bad. These perceptions affect the viewers' perception of men and women in the society.

Femininity and masculinity stereotypes in Papa Shirandula TV drama series

Many respondents agreed that Papa Shirandula television series stereotypes masculinity and femininity in its representation of men and women. Most women were stereotyped as dependent on men, housewives, ignorant and submissive. Men on the other hand are revealed as, drunk, in control and unbeatable by their wives. The most notable stereotype apart from gender was tribal stereotype which are misrepresentation of the various communities such as luhya being watchmen, kikuyu being money minded and husband batterers, Luos being flossy and proud among others.

Through the textual analysis and focused group discussion, this study revealed several interesting findings. First, male and female characters are popular on television; however, they are not fully free from stereotypically traditional feminine and masculine qualities. The mental, occupational, cultural and familial states included the most masculine characteristics, but it's clear that content creators are hesitant to fully cast an emotionally empowered female character. Most often television embraces characters that exhibit strong, powerful and more contemporary roles, yet concerning that women in Papa Shirandula are still portrayed as emotionally inferior or lacking in some way. Moreover, the findings show that feminine characters are written with an emphasis on the areas that feminism is traditionally supported and femininity continues to support it in different ways—such as occupation discrimination (occupational stereotype) emotional susceptibility (mental stereotype), cultural hegemony (cultural stereotype) and fewer family options like being a housewife (familial stereotype), but still often exhibit mentally and emotionally traditional storylines. The underlying issue in this study is to what extent television drama series impact on attitudes and behaviours of the members of the audience. Given that people are affected

by their entire environment, thus affected by notions of femininity and masculinity present in the family, school, church and the larger social environment, the task of isolating the effects of television drama series is a difficult one.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Perception of men and women by viewers.

Papa Shirandula TV drama series viewers' perception of men and women was highly informed by the culture in the programme's representation of men and women in the series. This was because the television series is basically a reflection of the society's view of men and women. There were very few scenes that the cast or the plot went against the societal expectation, view and norms of male and female roles. In examining the perception of men and women by the viewers of the TV drama series, the study concluded that the television drama series has a large and unmatched influence on the viewers' perception of men and women among the audience.

Television and framing of positions of men and women in the society.

The study therefore, concludes that television drama series has a vital role in framing the position of a man and woman in the society. Members of the audience consume television drama series messages about femininity and masculinity in a highly individualised fashion, hence, television drama series help not only constitute gender differences but also reflect or represent that difference.

Recommendations.

Perception of men and women by viewers.

Women organizations, government agencies such as Film classification board of Kenya ought to enact laws and policies that will act as gate keepers and regulate local television drama series to ensure balanced male and female representation and discourage stereotype and oppress women.

Television and framing of positions of men and women in the society.

This study recommend that television content developers should come up with a way of bringing down old and outdated gendered stereotypes and instead portray realities of femininity and masculinity in the character's life. They should aim at removing stumbling blocks to equality for women and through their series, allow women to construct their identity freely without stigmatization. This study notes that television content is shifting to more modern portrayal of characters. Papa Shirandula television drama script writer(s) and producers should tap into this and gain on creating new and stronger characters and incorporate emerging issues in their programme for younger generation to relate to. Their script should offer balanced view of femininity and masculinity in terms of family, career and opportunities.

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